

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:Sub. a<sup>1</sup>

1. A method of operating an electronic gaming apparatus having a plurality of symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows on its monitor comprising the steps of:

selecting initial symbols to be arrayed in said multiple symbol columns and rows;

displaying the initial symbols selected in an array of multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor;

designating a chosen number of said initial displayed symbols for replacement;

selecting said chosen number of replacement symbols;

replacing said chosen number of initial symbols on said monitor with replacement symbols;

determining whether said replacement symbols and remaining initial symbols constitute a winning combination; and,

rewarding a winning combination.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein game play can only be commenced if it is determined that an appropriate amount of money has been inserted into the gaming apparatus.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said symbols are randomly selected by a microprocessor.

Sub. a<sup>2</sup>

4. The method of claim 1 wherein symbols can be designated for replacement and be replaced on multiple occasions before it is determined whether a winning combination exists.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the option is provided of designating no symbols for replacement.

Sub. a<sup>3</sup> 6. The method of claim 1 wherein only one symbol  
can be designated for replacement.

5 7. The method of claim 1 wherein multiple symbols  
can be designated for replacement.

10 8. The method of claim 1 wherein a list of winning  
combinations is stored in a memory and compared to the  
combination displayed on said monitor to determine if there is  
a winning combination.

15 9. The method of claim 8 wherein winning  
combinations are determined by evaluating the symbols  
displayed across one or more rows.

20 10. The method of claim 8 wherein winning  
combinations are determined by evaluating the symbols  
displayed across one or more columns.

25 11. The method of claim 8 wherein said initial and  
replacement symbols are selected by generating random numbers  
and comparing those random numbers to numbered positions on a  
list of symbols.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein said initial and  
replacement symbols are selected by choosing symbols from a  
fixed position on a periodically shuffled list of symbols.

Sub. a<sup>4</sup> 13. The method of claim 1 wherein each said  
30 replacement symbol may be the same as the initial symbol it  
replaces.

35 14. The method of claim 13 wherein said replacement  
symbol may be itself replaced if it is the same as the initial  
symbol it replaces.

Sub. 057 15. The method of claim 14 wherein said replacement symbol may be itself replaced at the player's option if it is the same as the initial symbol it replaces.

5 16. The method of claim 14 wherein said replacement symbol will be automatically replaced if it is the same as the initial symbol it replaces.

10 17. The method of claim 6 wherein all symbols which are the same as the one symbol designated for replacement are also replaced.

Sub. abs 18. A method of operating an electronic gaming apparatus having a plurality of symbols and background colors arrayed in columns and rows on its monitor comprising the steps of:

15 selecting initial symbols and initial background colors for said symbols to be so arrayed in said multiple symbol columns and rows;

20 designating a chosen number of said initial symbols and initial background colors for replacement;

selecting said chosen number of replacement symbols and background colors;

25 replacing said chosen number of initial symbols and initial background colors on said monitor with replacement symbols and replacement background colors; and,

30 determining whether said replacement symbols and replacement background colors together with the remaining initial symbols and initial background colors constitute a winning combination; and,

rewarding a winning combination.

35 19. The method of claim 18 wherein said replacement background colors are chosen independently of said replacement symbols.

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20. An electronic gaming apparatus comprising:  
a monitor for displaying a plurality of symbols  
arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows;  
a memory which stores a list of possible  
symbols to be displayed on said monitor;  
a microprocessor to select symbols from said  
memory for display on said monitor and to determine  
whether a final group of displayed symbols creates a  
winning or losing game;  
a first switch to initiate game play by causing  
the microprocessor to select an initial set of symbols  
and display those initial symbols arrayed in multiple  
symbol columns and rows on said monitor; and,  
a second switch to complete game play by always  
allowing the player to choose for replacement at least  
one, but not all, of said initial symbols and have said  
microprocessor randomly select said replacement symbols  
from a full list of possible symbols in said memory and  
then display on said monitor said replacement symbols  
together with the remaining initial symbols to create  
said final group of displayed symbols arrayed in multiple  
symbol columns and rows.

21. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 20  
wherein said player chooses initial symbols for replacement by  
simply designating which initial symbols to replace.

22. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 20  
wherein said player chooses initial symbols for replacement by  
designating which initial symbols should be kept and then  
allowing said electronic gaming apparatus to replace all non-  
designated symbols.

23. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 20  
wherein said player can designate one or more columns of  
initial symbols for replacement.

24. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 23 wherein said columns of initial symbols have the appearance of reels on a mechanical reel type of slot machine.

5 25. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 20 wherein said player can designate one or more rows of initial symbols for replacement.

10 26. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 20 wherein nine symbols are arrayed in three rows and three columns.

15 27. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 20 further including a touch screen which is electronically connected to said microprocessor.

20 28. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 27 wherein said first and second switches appear on said touch screen and can be activated simply by touching the region of the touch screen in which they appear.

29. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 20 wherein only one symbol is chosen for replacement.

25 30. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim 20 wherein multiple symbols are chosen for replacement.

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